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A circular black ink stamp from the Office of Intellectual Property (OIP). The text "OIP" is at the top, "JC73" is at the top right, "MAR 03 2003" is in the center, and "PATENT &amp; TRADEMARK OFFICE" is at the bottom. A small number "9" is visible to the left of the stamp.

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MAR 06 2003

TECH CENTER 1600/2900

Group Art Unit: 1632

Attorney  
Docket: 00/20989

Sir:

This is in response to the United States Patent and Trademark Office Action mailed October 4, 2002, which response is being made on or before March 4, 2002, and for which a two-months extension fee is due and is being submitted herewith. Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**Please amend claims 23 and 37, without prejudice, as follows:**

A1

- (a) gap junctions with at least one cell of the excitable tissue region;  
and
- (b) a functional ion channel or transporter;

thereby modifying the electrophysiological function of the excitable tissue region.